《自美国大选后,有一个美国人开始过一种"没有特朗普的生活"》

自唐纳德.特朗普的获胜以后,哈格曼先生设计了古怪的实验,远离了喧嚣,过起了 类似隐居的生活,它部分是无声的抗议,部分是应对机制,部分是极端的自我管理方 案。



GLOUSTER, Ohio — At first, the experiment didn't have a name.

Right after the election, Erik Hagerman decided he'd take a break from reading about the hoopla of politics.

Donald Trump's victory shook him. Badly. And so Mr. Hagerman developed his own eccentric experiment, one that was part silent protest, part coping mechanism, part extreme self-care plan.

He swore that he would avoid learning about anything that happened to America after Nov. 8, 2016.

"It was draconian and complete," he said. "It's not like I wanted to just steer away from Trump or shift the



conversation. It was like I was a vampire and any photon of Trump would turn me to dust."

It was just going to be for a few days. But he is now more than a year into knowing almost nothing about American politics. He has managed to become shockingly uninformed during one of the most eventful chapters in modern American history. He is as ignorant as a contemporary citizen could ever hope to be.

James Comey. Russia. Robert Mueller. Las Vegas. The travel ban. "Alternative facts." Pussy hats. Scaramucci. Parkland. Big nuclear buttons. Roy Moore.

He knows none of it. To Mr. Hagerman, life is a spoiler.

"I just look at the weather," said Mr. Hagerman, 53, who lives alone on a pig farm in southeastern Ohio. "But it's only so diverting."

He says he has gotten used to a feeling that he hasn't experienced in a long time. "I am bored," he said. "But it's not bugging me."

It takes meticulous planning to find boredom. Mr. Hagerman commits as hard as a method actor, and his selfimposed regimen — white-noise tapes at the coffee shop, awkward scolding of friends, a ban on social media — has reshaped much of his life.

Extreme as it is, it's a path that likely holds some appeal for liberals these days — a D.I.Y. version of moving to Canada.



Democrats, liberals and leftists have coped with this first year of the Trump presidency in lots of ways. Some subsist on the thin gruel of political cartoon shows and online impeachment petitions. Others dwell online in the thrilling place where conspiracy is indistinguishable from truth. Others have been inspired to action, making their first run for public office, taking local action or marching in their first protest rally.

Mr. Hagerman has done the opposite of all of them.

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The fact that it's working for him — "I'm emotionally healthier than I've ever felt," he said — has made him question the very value of being fed each day by the media. Why do we bother tracking faraway political developments and distant campaign speeches? What good comes of it? Why do we read all these tweets anyway?

"I had been paying attention to the news for decades," Mr. Hagerman said. "And I never did anything with it."

At some point last year, he decided his experiment needed a name. He considered The Embargo, but it sounded too temporary. The Boycott? It came off a little whiny.

Mr. Hagerman has created a fortress around himself. "Tiny little boats of information can be dangerous," he said.

He decided that it would be called The Blockade. This life is still fairly new. Just a few years ago, he was a corporate executive at Nike (senior director of global digital commerce was his official, unwieldy title) working with teams of engineers to streamline the online shopping experience. Before that, he had worked digital jobs at Walmart and Disney.

"I worked 12-, 14-hour days," he said. "The calendar completely booked."



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But three years ago, he decided he had saved enough money to move to a farm, make elliptical sculptures — and, eventually, opt out of the national conversation entirely.

He lives alone and has never been married. As for money, a financial adviser in San Francisco manages his investments. Mr. Hagerman says he throws away the quarterly updates without reviewing them.

Mr. Hagerman begins every day with a 30-minute drive to Athens, the closest city of note, to get a cup of coffee — a triple-shot latte with whole milk. He goes early, before most customers have settled into the oversize chairs to scroll through their phones. To make sure he doesn't overhear idle chatter, he often listens to white noise through his headphones. (He used to listen to music, "but stray conversation can creep in between songs.")

At Donkey Coffee, everyone knows his order, and they know about The Blockade. "Our baristas know where he's at so they don't engage him on topics that would make him uncomfortable," said Angie Pyle, the coffee shop's co-owner.

"But the blockade has been pretty damn effective," Mr. Hagerman said.

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He said that with some pride, but he has the misgivings about disengaging from political life that you have, by now, surely been shouting at him as you read. "The first several months of this thing, I didn't feel all that great about it," he said. "It makes me a crappy citizen. It's the ostrich head-in-the-sand approach to political outcomes you disagree with."

"He has the privilege of constructing a world in which very little of what he doesn't have to deal with gets through," said his sister, Bonnie Hagerman. "That's a privilege. We all would like to construct our dream worlds. Erik is just more able to do it than others."



What if, he began to think, he could address his privilege, and the idea of broader good, near to home?

He has a master project, one that he thinks about obsessively, that he believes can serve as his contribution to American society.

He calls it The Lake.

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about nine months ago, he bought some 45 acres of land on the site of a former strip mine. The property, untouched for decades, has been reclaimed by nature — deer, beavers, salamanders and canopies of majestic trees are thriving.

Mr. Hagerman sees this land as his life's work. He plans to restore it, protect it, live on it and then preserve it for the public. "I will never sell this land," he said.

He wouldn't put it exactly this way, but he talks about the land in part as penance for the moral cost of his Blockade. He has come to believe that being a news consumer doesn't enhance society. He also believes that restoring a former coal mine and giving it to the future does.

"I see it as a contribution that has civic relevance that aligns with my passions and what I do well," Mr. Hagerman said. "I'm going to donate it. It's going to take most of my net worth. That's what I'm going to spend the rest of my money on."

In those carefree pre-Trump days, Mr. Hagerman would settle into the coffee shop with his newspaper and dig in. But after The Blockade, he could only read the weather — "For elderly men it's endlessly interesting" — and the real



estate listings.

It was during one of those long boring mornings, with no news to read, that he found the listing for The Lake.

"The first time I saw it, I said, 'This is it," he said.

